

Rigao (Ray) Liu

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Academic Positions

Washington & Jefferson College (W&J) (PA, USA)
Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science, 2025

Education

University of Kansas (KU) (KS, USA)
Ph.D.in Political Science, 2025
Fields: Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Methodology (Minor)

Shaanxi Normal University (Xi'an, China)
M.A., Economics, 2018

Jinling Institute of Technology (Nanjing, China)
B.A., Economics, 2015

Research Interests

International Political Economy, Public Opinion, China-Africa Relations, US-China Relations, Chinese Politics and Society, Experiment and Causal Inference.

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- [7] Nagao, Haruka, **Rigao Liu**, William Hatungimana, Leeann Youn, and John James Kennedy. "Vaccine diplomacy: The politics of Covid-19 vaccines and Public Opinion in Zimbabwe." *International Political Science Review* (2025): 01925121251328288. [Link](#)
- [6] **Liu, Rigao**, Haruka Nagao, and John James Kennedy. "The Digital Side to Mental Health: Uncovering the Relationship Between Screen-Based Entertainment and Mental Well-being Among Rural Elders in China." *Social Indicators Research* (2025): 1-19. [Link](#)
- [5] Nagao, Haruka, William Hatungimana, **Rigao Liu**, and John James Kennedy. "A Party with China: Political Party Affiliation and Perceptions of China in African Countries." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 62, no.2 (2024): 175-199 [Link](#)
- [4] **Liu, Rigao**, Haruka Nagao, William Hatungimana, Jiakun Jack Zhang, and John James Kennedy. "The Politics of Flu Vaccines: International Collaboration and Political Partisanship." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 25, no.2 (2024): 61-74. [Link](#)
- [3] **Liu, Rigao**, Haruka Nagao, and William Hatungimana. "Economic performance and good governance: Examining the role of economic well-being in local governance evaluation in China." *Journal of Chinese Governance* 9, no.2

(2024):153-172.Link (Collab with fellow KU graduates)

[2] Youn, Leeann, Haruka Nagao, William Hatungimana, and **Rigao Liu**. “Where do social media and education meet? A closer look at understanding of democracy.” *Democratization* 31,no.1 (2024):157-184. Link (Collab with fellow KU graduates)

[1] **Liu, Rigao**, Jiakun Jack Zhang, and Samantha A.Vortherms. “In the middle: American multinationals in China and trade war politics.” *Business and Politics* 24, no.4 (2022):348-376. Link

Book Chapters and Editor-Reviewed Articles

[2] **Liu, Rigao**, and John James Kennedy. “China’s Second Generation of Left Behind Children” *The China Story*, 2024. Link

[1] Kennedy, John James, and **Rigao Liu**. “One County, Many Paradigms: Diversity in China Political Studies.” In *Paradigm Shifts in Chinese Studies*, pp. 173-199. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2022. Link

Under Review

[4] Nagao, Haruka, **Rigao Liu**, William Hatungimana. “ The Impact of Great Power and Domestic Competition on Support for International Expansion in China.”

[3] Chu, Hyoungrohk, **Rigao Liu**, Leeann Youn, William Hatungimana, and Haruka Nagao. “Election Delay: Determinants of Postponing Elections and Public Support During a Crisis Time in Africa.” (Collab with fellow KU graduates) Revise and Resubmit at *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*.

[2] Nagao, Haruka, William Hatungimana, **Rigao Liu**, and John James Kennedy. “Perception of China in Zimbabwe: Influence of Partisanship and Media Exposure.” Revise and Resubmit at *Journal of Contemporary China*.

[1] Hatungimana, William, Haruka Nagao, **Rigao Liu**, and Leeann Youn. “The Price of Ethnic Exclusion in Times of Public Health Crisis in Africa.” Revise and Resubmit at *European Political Science Review* (Collab with fellow KU graduates)

Works in Progress

[8] “Nationalism and Common Prosperity: How Ideological Symbiosis Shapes Public Opinion in China.” (Book Manuscript in Preparation)

[7] “China in the Voce Populi: Africa-China Relations from the Bottom Up.” (Book Manuscript in Preparation, with William Hatungimana, and Haruka Nagao) (Collab with fellow KU graduates)

[6] “Ideological Symbiosis and Redistributive Preference in China.”

[5] “Bridging the East and South: A Chinese Perspective on the China-Africa Relations.” (with Haruka Nagao, and William Hatungimana) (Collab with fellow KU graduates)

[4] “Political Representation and Environmental Performance.” (with Leeann Youn, Haruka Nagao, and William Hatungimana) (Collab with fellow KU graduates)

[3] “Social Identity and Soft Power: The Perception of Chinese Immigrants in

Zimbabwe.” (with Haruka Nagao, William Hatungimana, and Takudzwa Chawota) (Collab with fellow KU graduates)

[2] “Theory of Mutual Noncompliance: Resolving Contradictions between Central Policies and Local Interests in Rural China.” (with John James Kennedy)

[1] “The Local Political Economy of Firm Exit: Industrial Policy and Investment Networks in the US-China Trade War.” (with Jiakun Jack Zhang and Samantha A. Vortherms)

Conferences

APSA Annual Meeting, 2023, 2024, 2025 (Scheduled)

MPSA Annual Meeting, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

SPSA Annual Meeting, 2021

Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs (MCAA) Annual Meeting, 2022

International Studies Association (ISA)-Midwest Annual Meeting, 2020, 2022

Awards and Fellowships

KU

IPSR Research Assistantship (work with Dr. Jiakun Jack Zhang), 2024-2025

Walter Thompson Research Scholarship, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

Institute for Policy and Social Research Doctoral Research Fellows, 2022-2023

Doctoral Student Research Fund, 2023

Graduate Student Travel Fund, 2023, 2024

Applied Humanities Summer Fellowship, 2022

CTE Course Transformation Grant (with Dr. Jiakun Jack Zhang), 2021

Diversity and Mentoring Program Grant, 2021

Undergraduate Research Mentor Spotlight, 2021

CLAS Graduate Scholarly Development Fund, 2021, 2022

Williams Jennings Bryan Essay Prize, 2020

External

Hayek Fund for Scholars, The Institute for Humane Studies, 2021, 2023

APSA Travel Grant, 2023, 2024, 2025

APSA First Generation Scholars Grant, 2024

ISA-Midwest Travel Grant, 2022

Survey and Fieldwork

“African Citizens’ Foreign Aid Preferences.” (Survey), Nigeria, 2025

“Citizens’ Domestic and Foreign Policy Preferences.” (Survey), China, 2024

“Zimbabweans’ Perspectives on China.” (Survey), Zimbabwe, 2023

“Bare Branch and Social Stability.” (Interview), Northwestern China, 2018, 2019

Teaching and Mentoring

W&J Visiting Assistant Professor

World Politics

International Politics

Politics of East Asia

International Political Economy

KU Graduate Teaching Assistant

Political Science Methods of Inquiry, Spring 2024

Introduction to Comparative Politics, Spring 2023

Introduction to International Politics, 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2023
 Introduction to Political Science as a Career, Fall 2022
 Introduction to American Politics, Fall 2020
 Chinese Foreign Policy, Spring 2020
 Life in China: Beyond Headlines, Fall 2019
 Reform in Contemporary China, Fall 2019, Fall 2022

Guest Lecture

Introduction to International Politics, KU, 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2023
 Fundamentals of Political Science, Oklahoma State University, Spring 2024

KU Undergraduate Research Mentor

Co-mentoring undergraduate students with Dr. Jiakun Jack Zhang
Bethlehem Legesse Kelecha(KU'24): "The Belt and Road initiative (BRI) and Chinese Economic Statecraft in East Africa." (Bethlehem's project won the KU Undergraduate Research Award in 2022)

Jackson Martin(KU'21): "Case Study of Foreign Invested Enterprises in the US-China Trade War." (Jackson's project won the KU Undergraduate Research Award in 2021)

Edmond Cheung(KU'22): "Measuring Corporate Opposition to the Trade War and its Effectiveness"; "Determinants and Returns of Corporate Political Action: Section 301 Tariff Exclusion Process." (Edmond presented this project at ISA-Midwest 2021)

Services

Discussant

KU Trade War Lab Speaker Series, 2021
 MCAA Annual Meeting, 2022
 SPSA Annual Meeting, 2021

Referee Service

Democratization, Journal of Contemporary China, Climatic Change, Journalism Practice, Frontiers in Political Science, Humanities and Social Sciences Communications

Campus Service

KU Trade War Lab Project Lead, 2020-
 KU Trade War Lab Outreach Team Leader, 2021-2022
 KU Faculty Mentor Award Committee, 2022
 KU CEAS Public Health Movie Series Discussant, 2022
 KU Undergraduate Research Mentor, 2020-2023
 First-Year Co-Representative, Political Science Graduate Students Association, 2019-2020

Languages and Skills

Chinese (Native), English (Fluent)
 Stata, R, SPSS, L^AT_EX, Qualtrics

References

John James Kennedy
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